

Application Serial No. 09/902,194
Amendment dated August 20, 2004
Docket No. 1232-4736

Remarks

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the above-identified application, in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1-25 are currently pending in the application. Applicants have amended claims 17, 21 and 25 to clarify an aspect of the claimed embodiment. For example, claim 17 was amended to further recite, “integrated environmental information forming means for forming integrated environmental information with respect to each product on the basis of the product constitution information and the environmental information.” Similar amendments were made to claims 21 and 25. Applicants submit that no new matter has been entered by way of this amendment. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the above-identified application, in view of the above amendments and following remarks.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

1. Claims 1, 3-16, 18-20, 22, 23 and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as allegedly being anticipated by US Patent No. 5,699,525 to Embutsu, et al. (“Embutsu, et al”). Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 4, 12, 18-20 and 22-24, as well as the claims directly or indirectly dependent therefrom, are patentably distinct from the cited reference.

Independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, “an environmental information storage section for storing environmental information about each product, the parts and/or the raw materials.” Applicants submit that Embutsu, et al. do not disclose, teach or suggest this element of claim 1.

The Office Action asserts that the “storing environmental information” recited in

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the claims is “disclosed in Embutsu, et al., Col. 6, lines 9-12, i.e., data is stored in correspondence to location information or geographic information....” (See, Office Action, page 2, ¶ 4). Applicants submit that the term “environmental” has been over-generalized in the Office Action.

Applicants submit that one of ordinary skill in the art, in light of the specification, would not interpret the term “environmental” as related to “location information” or “geographic information.” By way of example only, the application’s specification discusses, “environmental information” including “kind of material, material symbol...the existence/nonexistence of a ‘content of prohibited substance’, the existence/nonexistence of a content of substance to be controlled,” etc.... (See, specification, page 8, line 14-page 9, line 10). Moreover, as discussed in the specification, integrating this type of “environmental information,” “enables the use of parts...designs and manufacture of products friendly to the environment.” (See, specification, page 9, lines 9-10).

Although it is generally true that claim terms are given their broadest reasonable interpretation during prosecution by the USPTO, Applicants respectfully submit that in view of Applicants’ specification, it is not reasonable to construe environmental to include “location information” or “geographic information” as suggested by the Office Action.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that for at least this reason independent claims 1, 4, 12, 18-20 and 22-24, as well as the claims directly or indirectly dependent therefrom, are patentably distinct from Embutsu, et al. Therefore, Applicants request withdrawal of this ground of rejections.

2. Claims 17, 21 and 25 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as allegedly

being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,633,795 to Suzuki, et al. (“Suzuki, et al”). Applicants respectfully submit that amended independent claims 17, 21, and 25 are patentably distinct from the cited reference.

Amended independent claim 17, recites, *inter alia*, “integrated environmental information forming means for forming integrated environmental information with respect to each product on the basis of the product constitution information and the environmental information.” Applicants submit that the Suzuki, et al. patent does not disclose, teach or suggest this claim element.

Instead, Suzuki, et al. disclose a manufactured article recycling system. In Suzuki et al.’s system, different parts of an item to be recycled are routed to locations configured with different recycling capabilities. More specifically, Suzuki, et al. disclose the various types of information used to determine what route (6d-6j in Fig. 1) components are sent for recycling. To achieve this end Suzuki, et al. rely on “an Article Specification Information Database 35...[wherein] storing the specification information of the articles subject to the processings is previously generated or created.” (See, Suzuki, et al., Col. 34, lines 51-52). Furthermore, Suzuki, et al. disclose that this information may be generated by the designer during the design process. (See, Suzuki, et al., Col. 34, lines 53-55).

Accordingly, Applicants submit that an integrating environmental information means, as recited in independent claim 17, is patentably distinct from Suzuki, et al.’s previously generated or created data used to make recycling routing determinations. Applicants submit that amended independent claims 21 and 25 are also patentably distinct from the Suzuki, et al. for at least similar reasons. Therefore, Applicants request withdrawal of this ground of rejections.

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Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Embutsu, et al. as applied to claim 1 above and further in view of US Patent No. 6,321,983 to Katayanagi, et al. (“Katayanagi, et al.”). Applicants respectfully submit that claim 2 is patentably distinct from the cited references taken alone or in combination.

Applicants submit that Katayanagi, et al. does not remedy the deficiencies identified in Embutsu, et al. with regard to independent claim 1. Therefore, because claim 2 is dependent from independent claim 1, Applicants submit that claim 2 is patentably distinct from the cited references for at least the reasons discussed above with regard to independent claim 1. Therefore, Applicants request withdrawal of this ground of rejection.

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CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendment and reconsideration in view of the foregoing. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as presented herein are allowable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below, should that in anyway facilitate prosecution.

Applicants believe no fee nor extension of time is required for this filing. However, should an extension of time be necessary to render this filing timely, such extension is hereby petitioned and the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for this paper, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4736

Respectfully submitted,
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